

# Proposed Budget FY2026

## **Sustainable Success:**

Meeting Community Expectations  
through Strategic Efficiency

**March 4, 2025**

County Administrator: Bill Ashton



**STAFFORD**  
*Virginia*

**FY2024 Budget awarded GFOA's Distinguished Budget Award (35th consecutive year).**

**FY2023 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report awarded GFOA's Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting (42nd consecutive year).**

Maintained Stafford's three AAA bond ratings.

**Broke ground on a new high school and approved two new elementary schools.**

Completed the VATI grant in western Stafford County, partnering with Comcast to connect nearly 700 unserved residents.

**Stafford started a \$12.5 million project to improve safety on Berea Church Road.**

The Board approved a six-member ambulance crew and a new Rock Hill Station 8, which is currently in the design phase.

**Stafford continued to foster private investment, welcoming major projects like FedEx leasing 450,000 square feet and Amazon completing a 630,000-square-foot cross-dock facility.**

The Board also approved two individual data center projects and a new data center campus with multiple facilities.

**Won third place in the 2024 Digital Counties Survey, measuring the efficiency and responsiveness of local government technology practices.**

The County implemented a more efficient Board meeting schedule, allowing more significant opportunities for community participation.

**Utilities became a certified lead-free system.**

Neared completion on the nearly \$10 million Ferry Farm water main place replacement project.

**Facilitated a \$500,000 grant to fund Lake Arrowhead's dam spillway improvement projects.**

The Treasurer's Office received accreditation from the Treasurers' Association of Virginia.

**Stafford's two wastewater treatment facilities, Aquia and Little Falls Run, have been nationally recognized by the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) for their excellence in wastewater treatment.**

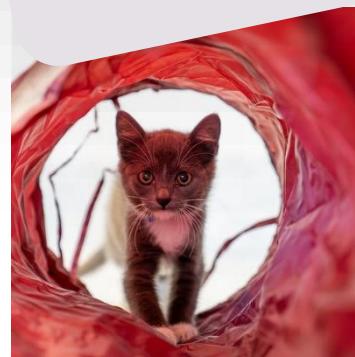
Stafford County won three National Association of Counties (NACo) 2024 Achievement Awards, awards that recognize outstanding government programs and services. Stafford won two awards in the Human Services category and one in the Civic Education and Public Information category.

**Stafford won two Virginia Association of Counties (VACO) 2024 Achievement Awards for its R-Board compost outreach program and Utilities' "Captain Clog" education effort.**

Conducted a second Community Survey designed to help the Board with their annual financial planning progress alongside Stafford's Strategic Plan.



## STAFFORD *Cares* 2024 Accomplishments



# Stafford County 2024 Profile



**\$529,000**

MEDIAN HOME MARKET PRICE



**\$133,792**

MEDIAN INCOME



**172,668**

POPULATION



**2.90%**

UNEMPLOYMENT



**\$458,800**

MEDIAN ASSESSED HOME VALUE



**37.6 minutes**

MEAN TRAVEL TO WORK

# Where Stafford Ranks

## 7 Comparable Jurisdictions

Albemarle County  
Chesterfield County  
Hanover County  
Henrico County  
James City County  
Prince William County  
Spotsylvania County  
Stafford County

1<sup>st</sup>

Median Income

1<sup>st</sup>

Student Population  
as a Percentage of  
Total Population

3<sup>rd</sup>

Real Estate Taxes  
as a % of  
Median Income  
(1<sup>st</sup> being lowest)

3<sup>rd</sup>

Personal Property  
Taxes as a % of  
Median Income  
(1<sup>st</sup> being lowest)

## Growth Direction

According to Weldon-Cooper, Stafford County is **no longer** in Virginia's Top 10 fastest-growing communities as of 2024.

Rank	County
1	New Kent
2	Goochland
3	Louisa
4	Caroline
5	Suffolk
6	Chesterfield
7	Frederick
8	Falls Church
9	Spotsylvania
10	Orange

### Stafford

58% drop in growth  
from 2023 to 2024

### Loudoun

82% drop in growth  
from 2023 to 2024

**Proposed  
Budget  
Drivers**

**Proposed  
Budget  
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**FY2026  
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Other Funds**

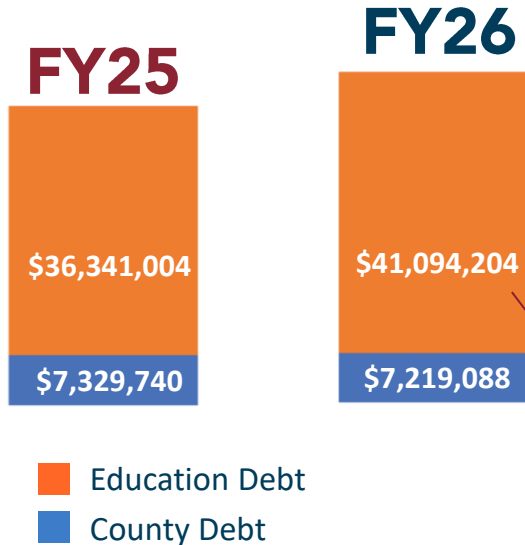
**Proposed  
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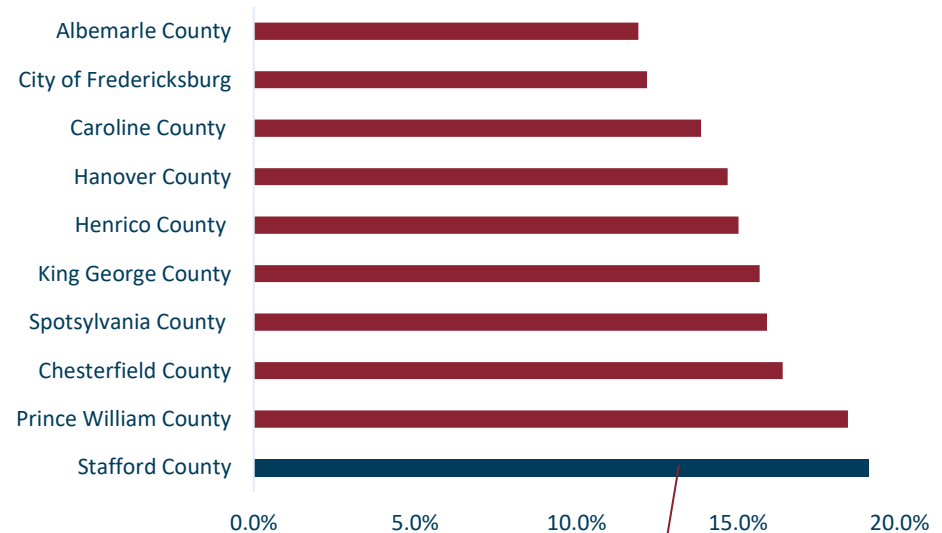
# Education Growth Impacts

## Debt Service Year-to-Year



More than 85% of the total debt for the general fund is education

## Student % of Population



Stafford continues to see high levels of students as a part of the County's population

# Unfunded Mandate – Disabled Veteran Relief- Stafford

**CY2011****157**

Total of disabled  
veterans in Stafford  
County

**\$433K**

Tax relief totals

**CY2024****4,348**

Total of disabled  
veterans in Stafford  
County

**\$22M**

Tax relief totals

**\$12**

Cost per Real Estate  
Tax Bill

**\$395**

Cost per Real Estate  
Tax Bill

**8.5%**

Of the Total State Disabled Veteran Relief is paid by Stafford, while only 2% of the population

**10%**

Of the Total State Disabled Veterans is in Stafford, while only 2% of the population

**80%**

Faster than the statewide average, as Stafford's program outpaces the rest of the state

**10**

New applications averaged per day in Stafford's program

**4964%**

Stafford's program  
increase from 2011 - 2024

**\$11M**

Stafford's projected  
increase of tax relief  
for FY2026

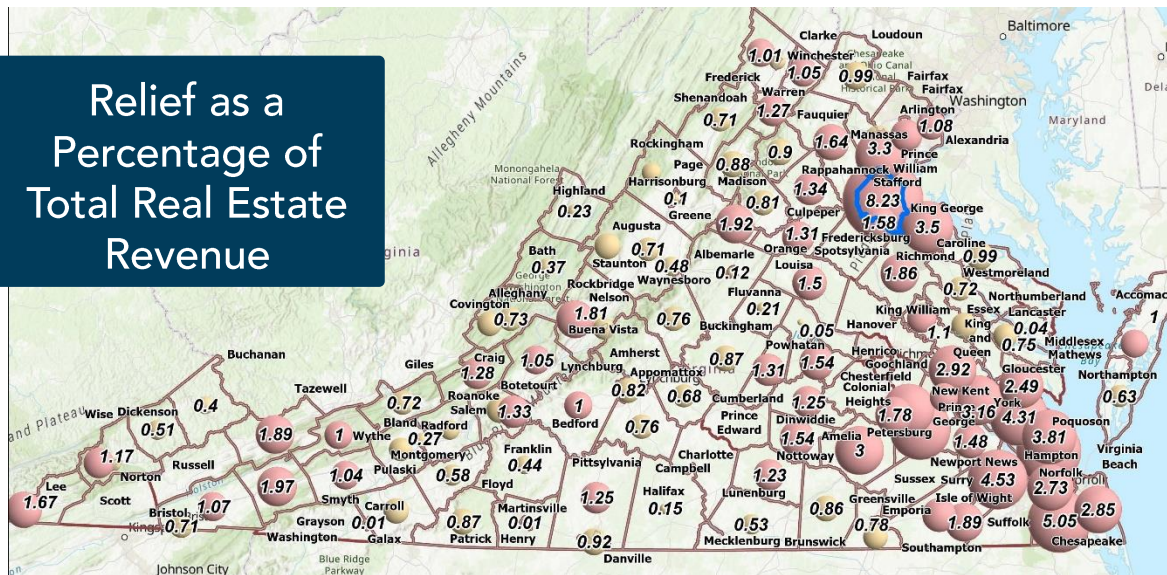
**\$165M**

Stafford's projected  
tax dollars by 2034



# Unfunded Mandate – Disabled Veteran Relief- Statewide

Relief as a  
Percentage of  
Total Real Estate  
Revenue



**8,644,727**

Virginia Population



**2,745%**

Percentage Increase  
from 2011 - 2024



**\$229M**

Total Tax Dollars in 2024

**51,497**

Total Disabled Vets in Virginia

**\$962M**

Projected Tax Dollars in 2034



# Mandatory Commitments for Growth and Partnerships

**\$2.4M**

## **Mandatory Commitments**

Mid-Year and Social Service Positions  
Financial Policy Increases  
M365 Cost Phasing  
Fire and Rescue Physicals  
Transfer to Transportation Fund  
Contracts and Inflation

**\$2.4M**

## **Partner Commitments**

Rappahannock Regional Jail  
Juvenile Detention Center  
Health Department  
Partner Agencies



**\$11.8M**

Increase in the unfunded  
tax relief mandates



**\$4.8M**

Increase in debt service  
for new schools



**\$4.8M**

Increase for community  
obligations and commitments

## 8-Cent Increase

The FY2026 budget process began with a required \$21.4 million increase to address essential funding obligations.

## FY26 Budget Impacts

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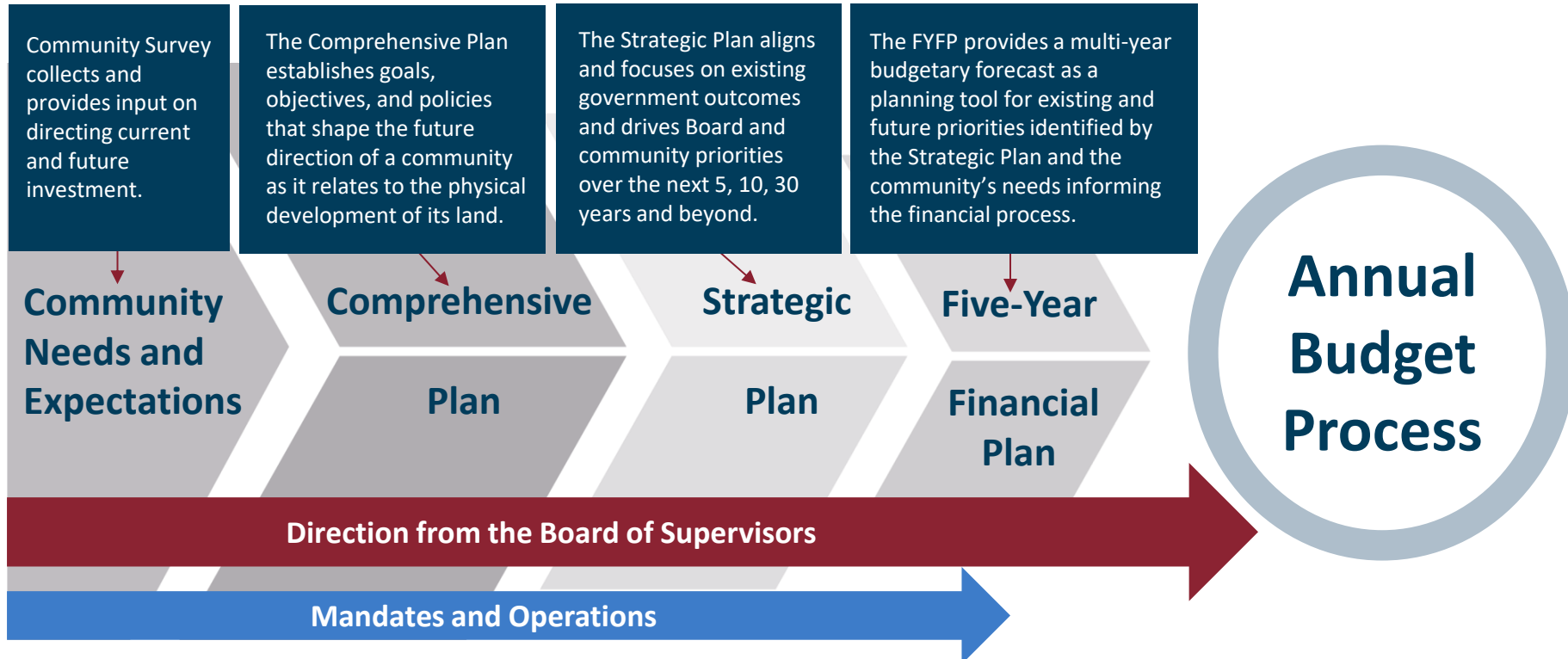
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## **Sustainable Success:**

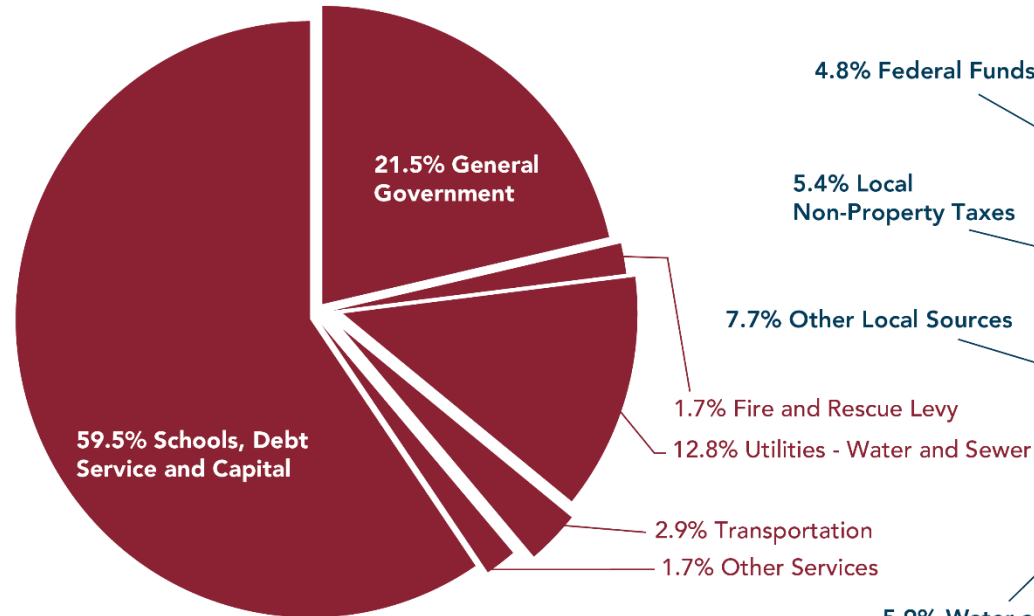
Meeting Community Expectations through Strategic Efficiency

# Financial Planning Process

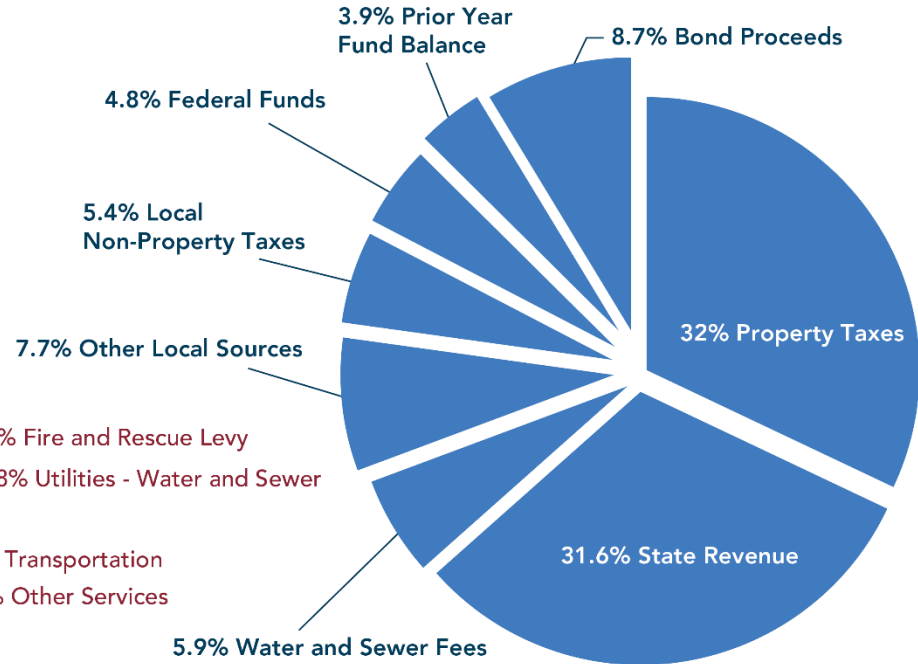


# Proposed Budget Overview – FY2026 All Funds

All Fund Expenditures



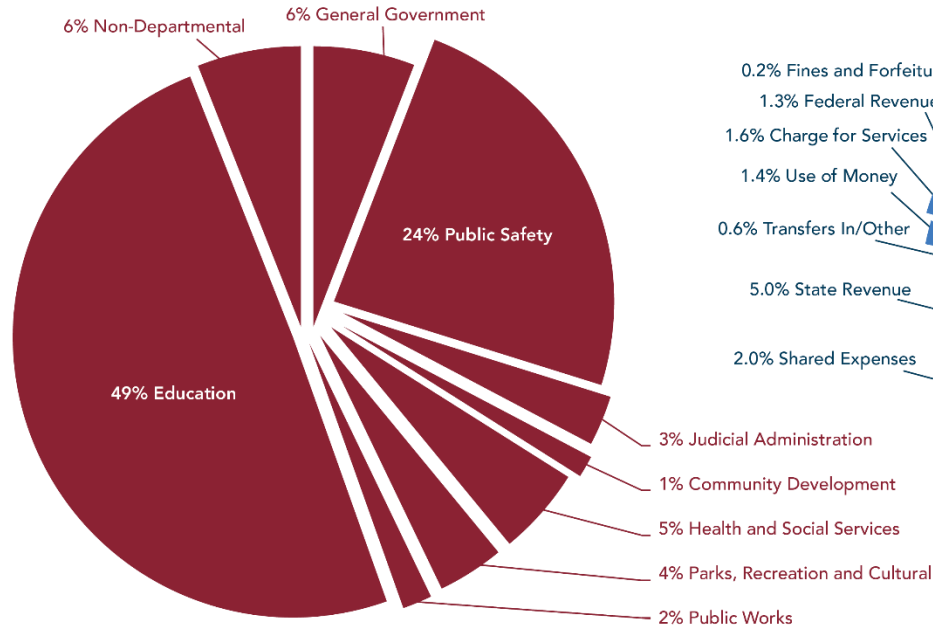
All Fund Revenues



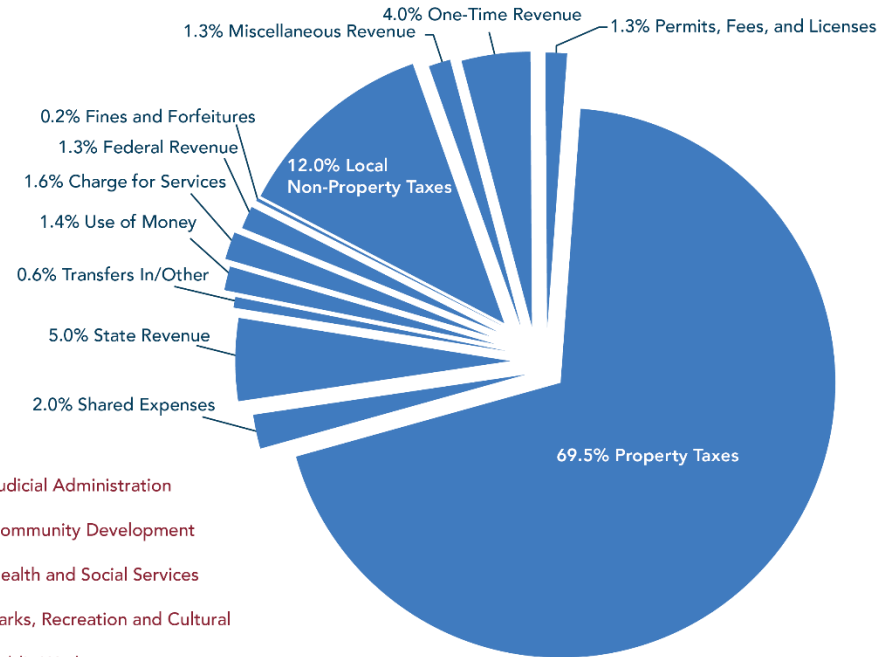
All Funds Total: \$1,015,097,345

# Proposed Budget Overview – FY2026 General Fund

## General Fund Expenditures



## General Fund Revenues



General Fund Total: \$462,105,852



# Budget Overview

## Revenues

Proposed FY26 Tax Rate | **\$0.9436**  
(\$0.8936 FY25 Adopted)

Proposed FY26 Fire Levy | **\$0.0131**  
(no change)

Not a reassessment year

Property tax revenue increase | **7%**

Increase in tax relief | **72.5%**

Consumption tax revenue decrease | **-1.9%**

Median assessed home value | **\$458,800**

Average tax bill | **\$4,329**

## Expenditures

Overall General Fund increase | **3.8%**

Overall School Operating Fund increase | **2.9%**

### General Fund Operating Budget Drivers

- Education Funding \$11.9M
- Public Safety Support \$5.1M
- General Gov. Support \$4.2M
- Transportation \$251K

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# Proposed Budget Priorities

## **Sustainable Success:**

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### **Priority 1:**

Funding Priorities for Thriving Communities

### **Priority 2:**

Keeping Our Commitment to Education

### **Priority 3:**

Competitive Compensation for Dedicated  
Employees

# Budget Savings

## \$4M

Decrease from FY2025 Base



**\$265K**

Opt-Out Health  
Insurance



**\$333K**

Computer-  
aided dispatch  
System Savings



**\$1.8M**

Managed  
Vacancy  
Savings



**\$1.2M**

Fund  
Reductions and  
Reallocations



**\$467K**

Repurposing of  
Positions and  
Payroll  
Deductions



ECONOMIC  
DIVERSIFICATION



### Initiative 3.4

Economic Development Authority  
Ongoing Support Funding



GROWTH MANAGEMENT  
FOR COMMUNITY  
SUSTAINABILITY

### Initiative 4.4

Addition of three revenue-neutral  
positions to assist with environmental  
efforts



VIBRANT COMMUNITY THROUGH  
THE ARTS, RECREATION, CULTURE,  
HISTORY AND TOURISM

### Initiative 5.1

Over \$564K in investments to  
Chichester Park and Carl Lewis building



DEDICATED AND RESPONSIVE  
PUBLIC SAFETY TEAM



### Initiative 6.4

Implementing a new Computer-Aided  
Dispatch system and Emergency  
Communications Center training  
platform for an investment of \$4M



EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNANCE  
WITH TRANSFORMATIONAL  
LEADERSHIP

### Initiative 7.3

Adding a second cohort to the  
Leadership Institute to continue  
investing in future leaders

[ STAFFORD COUNTY  
2040  
VISION ]

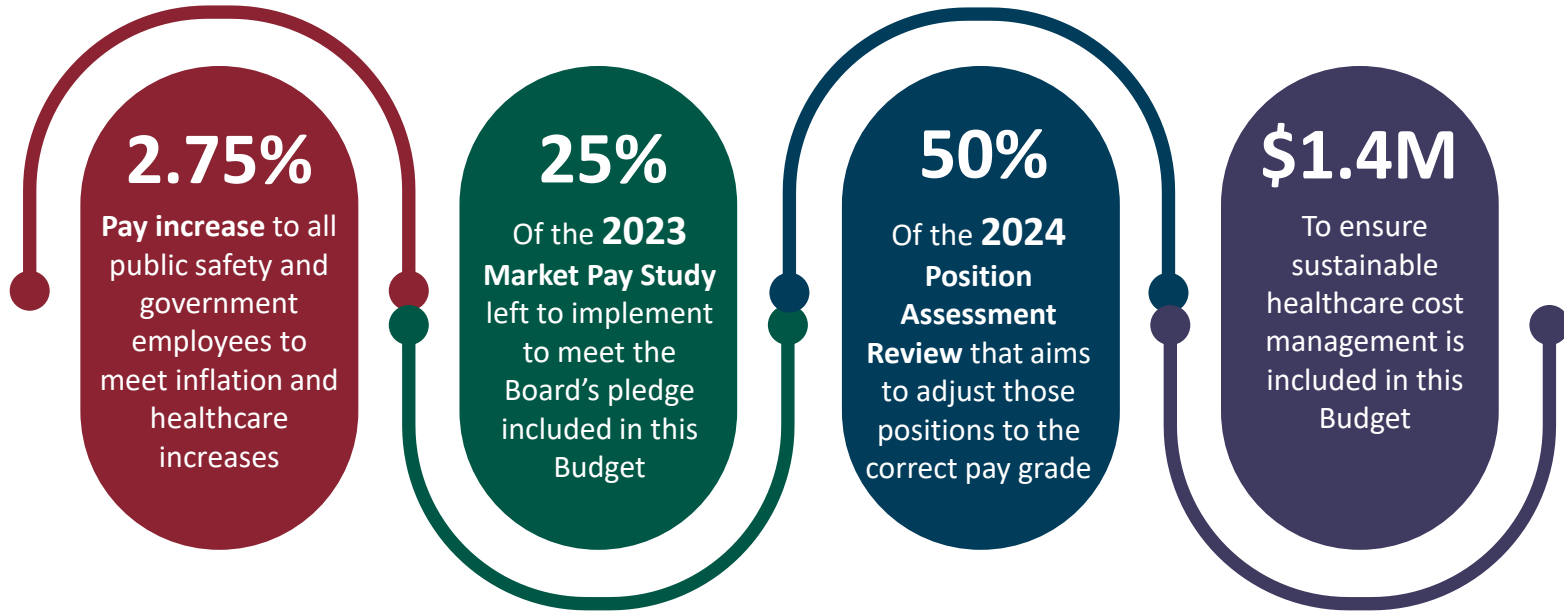
## Commitment to a Thriving Community

# Commitment to Education





# Commitment to Dedicated Staff



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## \$14.3M ►

Construction efforts for the Drew Middle School rebuild will begin, while planning efforts have commenced for the Hartwood Elementary School rebuild.

## \$1.3M ►

Exciting improvements coming to Embrey Mill to convert fields 5 and 6 to synthetic turf.

## \$15.9M ►

Work begins on the Aquia Station 9 rebuild project, which aims to improve emergency response times for residents in the area.

## \$1.6M ►

Installation of network fiber cable to complete the county fiber ring, providing connectivity across government facilities.

# FY2026 Capital Program



# Transportation Fund



DEVELOP A MULTIMODAL  
INFRASTRUCTURE AND  
TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Ensuring safe and efficient roads remains a top priority in this Budget, with dedicated transportation funding playing a key role. This commitment keeps Bond-funded and other critical road projects moving forward, improving connectivity and meeting the needs of our growing community.

**\$2.4M**

Onville Road Widening  
(Bond Project)



01

**\$10.3M**  
Brooke Road  
Reconstruction

02

03

**\$723K**

Route 628/Route 1  
(American Legion Road/Eskimo  
Hill Road Left Turn Lanes)

**\$125K**

High School  
Access Study

04

# Utilities Fund - \$77M



## 6.5%

Third-Year Planned  
Rate Increase



## Personnel

### New Position Requests:

- Two Civil Engineer Interns Part-Time
- Procurement Specialist

The Board has approved a three-year funding plan with rate adjustments to address inflation and infrastructure demands. These investments ensure we continue providing high-quality drinking water and sewer services while keeping our system reliable and sustainable.

## Capital Program

Water Plant Regulatory Upgrades  
Lake Mooney to North Stafford Distribution Mains  
Utilities Department Facility Expansion  
Potomac Creek/Centreport Parkway Sewer Improvements

### 3R Program

Neighborhood and Transmission Water Main Replacement  
Sewer Main and Pump Station Renewal  
Water Tank Rehabilitation Program

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Mar  
2025**04** | Proposed Budget**04** | Authorization to Advertise Budget Public Hearing**11** | Budget Work Session - General Fund and CIP**12** | Joint SB/BOS Meeting - School Budget**13-14** | Individual Board Member Review of Budget**18** | BWS - Other Funds**18** | Authorization to Advertise Public Hearing:  
Ordinance changes, fee changes, VPSA, Tax Rates & CIP**25** | Public Hearing BudgetApr  
2025**03** | Joint SB/BOS Meeting - School Budget**7-11** | Individual Board Member Review of Budget**15** | FY2026 Third Quarter Review Presentation**15** | Public Hearings CIP, Tax Rates, VPSA and Ordinance/Fee Changes**15** | Budget Adoption

**BWS - Budget Work Session**  
**FYFP - Five Year Financial Plan**  
**CIP - Capital Improvements Plan**  
**SB - School Board**

Public Participation

[WWW.STAFFORDCOUNTYVA.GOV/BUDGET](http://WWW.STAFFORDCOUNTYVA.GOV/BUDGET)

Public Participation

# FY2026 BUDGET CALENDAR

# **Sustainable Success:** Meeting Community Expectations through Strategic Efficiency

**Funding Priorities for Thriving Communities**

**Keeping Our Commitment to Education**

**Competitive Compensation for Dedicated Employees**

**STAFFORD**  
*Virginia*

